

## BOOK OPENINGS



APRIL 13, 6-8PM

FLESH

ELIZABETH DILLER and RICARDO SCOFIDIO  
Published by Princeton Architectural Press.

Targeting the body as "a site of transient inscriptions, inscrutable from program," New York architects Elizabeth Diller and Ricardo Scofidio construct *Flesh*, a book/project that, in their words, "maps out strategies for contractual space in which architecture can perform critically within encoded spaces of privacy and publicity." *Flesh* reworks projects through multiple strands of text and imagery into a new "indexical structure" that allows the reader to determine diverse paths through the document.

Diller + Scofidio is a collaborative team involved in cross-disciplinary work that incorporates architecture with the performing and the visual arts. Recent projects include installations: *Loophole*, *Para-site*, *Tourism*, *unit Case Studies*; and *The Slow House*. Elizabeth Diller is an assistant professor of architecture at Princeton University and Ricardo Scofidio is a professor of architecture at Cooper Union.

8.25 x 10.75

257 pp.

50 col., 250 b/w

paper \$54.95



8 April - 9 May, 1995  
Between War and Peace

Komar + Melamid

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NEWSLETTERS ARE ONLY \$12/YEAR.

APRIL 21, 6-8PM  
MORTAL CITY

edited by PETER LANG

"Each and every individual in the global community is both spectator and participant in urban carnage: responsible both for the international administration of violence and its profitable documentation for world market consumption."

—Peter Lang

Urban violence increasingly dominates our day-to-day existence: we watch footage of the earthquake in Japan, the bombing of Chechnya, the war in Bosnia—and not so long ago, the same year that war broke out in Bosnia, we watched the horror of the Los Angeles riots. As events in Sarajevo and Los Angeles demonstrate, these crises continue without imminent resolutions. The very definitions of the city and of violence are constantly being revised: the city is no longer a fixed site but has hemorrhaged across real and imagined space; while violence has moved beyond the traditional arenas of social conflict to pervade daily life.

*Mortal City*, probes the polemical nature of urban violence. The essays present several different approaches to the subject, reflecting the most recent historical, geographical, and theoretical developments in these fields. Essays by Donald Albrecht, Diane Ghirardo, Herbert Muschamp, Richard Plunz, and Lebbeus Woods, among others, are accompanied by photo essays by Warchitecture and Camilo Vergara and an interview with Mark Wigley.

The first in a series of Storefront books, *Mortal City* is a collaborative publication between Princeton Architectural Press and Storefront for Art and Architecture.

5.75 x 8.375

112 pp.

17 b/w illustrations

Paper \$12.95

## PERFORMANCE

Archisés  
Lucio Pozzi

MAY 13, 11AM-7PM  
An 8-hour performance

## SPRING BENEFIT

50 years=\$50 Spring Benefit  
Help Stamp Out Historical Amnesia

Works on view  
FRIDAY, MARCH 31, 12-6  
SATURDAY, APRIL 1, 12-6

Party/raffle  
APRIL 1, 6:30-9PM

Each chance is \$50. Each ticket is guaranteed a prize of a specially created artist/architect created work reflecting on the 50th anniversary of the end of world war II (or the beginning of World War III). Tickets on sale at Storefront or by mail from March 20. To include works by: Perry Barlow, Dan Graham, Richard Haas, Ronald Jones, Lucio Pozzi, Allan Wexler and many more. Call 212.431.5795 for more information.

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Komar + Melamid  
Between War and Peace



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97 KENMARKE STREET, NEW YORK, NY 10012, U.S.A. TEL. 212.431.5795 FAX. 212.431.5755

8 April - 9 May, 1995

Gallery Hours: Tuesday-Saturday, 12-6pm  
Opening Reception: Saturday, April 8, 6-8pm

A PARTICIPATORY INSTALLATION TO RE-EXAMINE THE  
LEGACY THAT CHANGED OUR WORLD RESULTING FROM  
THE YALTA CONFERENCE, 50 YEARS AGO THIS YEAR

## Why We Are Returning To This Theme

1945: the end of World War II and the beginning of the UN era. The final meeting between Stalin, Roosevelt and Churchill convened. In two months Roosevelt will be dead, but in the old photograph of the Yalta Conference, they are eternally together. In the background, ministers, politicians, and bureaucrats—allies in black jackets and ties—pose for history's camera: we can see the nations, cultures, and myths looming behind them.

1995: we are returning to this image 50 years later. Five years ago, our mural entitled *Allies*, scheduled to be painted near the United Nations building, was forbidden by city authorities. We are proposing that a new version of *Allies* be realized in the United Nations school. We are approaching a time of historical amnesia. How many New York schoolchildren, after playing a computer game in which Washington battles the British with the help of Lenin, would be surprised? How many remember the Yalta prehistory of the Security Council? How has it come about that several countries can send UN troops into foreign countries? How many of us, no longer schoolchildren, feel comfortable with the fact that many nations don't have the power of veto in this international police state? And why isn't "international" government elected in a democratic fashion by all nations?

We look at the half-century old photograph of the Yalta conference—we see a regent of the British Crown, an American president, and a Russian dictator—a true twentieth-century icon: Churchill, Roosevelt, and Stalin. At once triplets as well as a three-headed dragon—the visible symbol of all compromises, of bleak expectations and pragmatic hopes. For us, who were born during the final years of the war, the faces of these leaders blur together with faces from the family photo albums: the faces of mothers and fathers in military uniforms. The end of the war and the beginning of peace become indistinguishable, as does public history and the beginning of a private biography. Our biography belongs to Russia and America. The spirit and the illusion of the Allies lives and mutates in our work. After the dissolution of the Soviet Empire, the image of Yalta changes as well. It becomes clear that having swallowed Eastern Europe whole, communism became fatally poisoned. New Russia and Young America can not afford to forget this. We hope our project will have a chance to become realized and, once again, will remind us of a great, contradictory lesson of history, of a great, bloody and perilous political game. That is why we are returning to this theme and bringing out a new project before the public scrutiny.

Together with Storefront for Art and Architecture, we are celebrating the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II with an exhibition of several versions of our public art proposal. We have titled these works, created over a period of several years, *Between War and Peace*. A ballot box, which will literally allow the viewer to vote for his or her favorite version, is an integral aspect of the installation. We think that this approach will allow us to establish genuine contact with the public.

STOREFRONT FOR ART AND ARCHITECTURE  
PROGRAMS ARE SUPPORTED BY

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## EXHIBITION

**Komar + Melamid**  
Between War and Peace:  
A participatory installation

April 8-May 13, 1995  
Gallery House, Tuesday-Saturday, 12-8pm  
Opening Reception, Saturday, April 8, 6-8pm

In February 1945 three leaders of powerful nations, Winston Churchill, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Joseph Stalin met at Yalta, in Russia by the Crimean Sea, at a time when the nations of the world were still engulfed by the Second World War. The result of their meeting was that carved up something that did not belong to them amongst themselves. They divided the world into spheres of influence that they would control. They decided what the world would look like and placed the future balance of power in their hands. By doing so, these three set up the territories and issues of contention for the next war. The process of their decision-making was not transparent.

What specifically transpired outside the official releases in the meeting room, what secret pacts were made, what unholy alliances forged we can only imagine. And we should. What were the circumstances under which their decisions were made? What architectural space could befit such totalitarian authority? Each of these three figures was held in awe (or revulsion depending on your vantage point) by millions. The cult of their personalities loomed large, to say the least. Then, as now individual decision-making on the part of world citizenry was deferred to the leaders, forfeiting judgment in submissions of allegiance to charismatic chiefs. Churchill, Stalin and Roosevelt addressed their constituents en masse—at rallies, parades, or through radio addresses. The mass energy created in these forums was large enough and convincing enough for most to willingly repress individuality to a collective that seemed solid and powerful. Of course, at the time there was yet another personality with a large following operating in the world theater to make us wary of sacrificing individual will, as Adolf Hitler was still alive at the time of the Yalta

conference.

How do these iron figures exist in our minds? These leaders of a time past exercised a divine, world-altering influence that superimposed arbitrary political distinctions over and through long standing national and ethnic histories. They operated outside public supervision not only through the formal distance imposed by their offices, but through the fact that the actual texts of the Yalta Conferences were not made public until 1947. Through behind-the-scene dealings, their reputations managed to survive this historical moment preserving their images as the heroes of a new-world order instead of as fate-manipulators.

The legacy of Yalta, as Komar and Melamid see it, the "mating of the super powers" is their offspring—the post World War II world. This period that followed 1945 which we have called the Cold War, was like the *Imperium Romana* in the first and second centuries, a period of world domination by supreme national powers during which no major wars were fought. The public optimism that followed Yalta anticipated an end to world conflict with good reason. This optimism continued as each victory was won, as it did through subsequent peace signings and the creation of the United Nations. Unfortunately this was a brief interlude—a liminal stage between War and Peace, again. During this "peace" of the Cold War, the United States and the USSR competed for power and kept each other at bay through the mutual threat of nuclear destruction, while less powerful nations were held to subservient roles dependent on courting and maintaining the favor of either of these two powers. Cold or Hot, the post-1945 period with its tension, political posturing, weapons build-ups, the eventual collapse of the Soviet bloc and the ensuing conflicts in their sphere, was shaped in part through decisions made at the Yalta conference. As the Cold War seems to have dissipated into a series of horrific conflicts in Europe, post-1945 looks less like a period



pro-democracy nations. The countries under Stalin's influence refused aid under Soviet demands. As The Iron Curtain was drawn along these lines, the US and the Soviet Union competed for influence and supremacy through military prowess and economic subsidies. With the mutual military intervention agreements of NATO and the Warsaw Pact alliances, the superpowers controlled and suppressed local hostilities and ethnic rivalries through the threat of massive retaliation and possible nuclear annihilation. When this "balance of terror" began to weaken in the 1980's as the Soviet economy faltered we began to see some of the structural weaknesses of the Yalta agreements. The architects of the post-1945 world built us a foundation of incompatible components and covered it up so we could not see what they had done. As its support system collapses revealing its weaknesses we have the choice of how to use its dismembered elements.

Vitaly Komar and Alexander Melamid grew up in the specter of Joseph Stalin, the image of whose being permeated culture and society in the former Soviet Republics. Portraits of the leader were omnipresent. Posters, banners and murals of Stalin were created in a style that enforced the perception of the appearance of a leader. Totalitarian control of words as well as images incorporated writers and artists into a massive propaganda effort that conferred a fabricated and institutionalized cultural tradition onto the government.

The type of precision and clarity associated with the officially sanctioned Soviet art of Social Realism that Komar & Melamid were expected to produce, was viewed publicly as observed fact and accepted as indisputable truth. The potential manipulation of opinion through the cult of "officialdom" was plainly visible to Komar and Melamid in Russia, as it is in America where we frequently accept the limited information we are given if presented in

of peace and more and more like pre-World War III.

The void in our knowledge of the specifics of Yalta's history and its processes invited a vague understanding based on the partial information we have been given or have accepted. This incomplete picture collapsed into total amnesia as time passed and the events receded in our memory. Now as we are asked to comprehend the Cold War and the war that currently ravages the former Yugoslavia, we should look back to the events surrounding World War II for clues as to how the power blocs and national divisions that define our current situation were made.

America and the Soviet Union were the main players in the Yalta agreements while the other world powers, Britain and France, which had been economically and psychologically devastated by the war, took a backseat in the post-WW II world. Thus, the negotiations at Yalta were between FDR and Stalin towards recognizing the nations' respective interests. Roosevelt made concessions to the Soviets in exchange for their declaration of war on Japan after the fall of the Third Reich. These concessions included giving Stalin a free hand in the Balkan States and East Germany, as well as allowing the Soviets to wiggle out of an agreement to support democracy in the countries liberated from the Nazis. As a further concession in the Yalta bargaining process, Stalin was allowed to design the post-war Polish state. The Poland agreed on was largely dictated physically and politically by Stalin, who refused to recognize the Free Polish democratic government which had been struggling to organize in London during the war and instead pushed for a Soviet-supported state, tolerating only token opposition party presence. Another lasting legacy of the conference was the arrogant gesture which designated the United Nations Security Council's permanent members and granted them veto power. This component of the Yalta accords left the world with an international governing force hampered by institutional paralysis from birth.

In the aftermath of Yalta, the American Marshall Plan pumped millions of dollars in economic aid and military protection into rebuilding Europe's



the manner which we recognize. Thus, a message from our President, or the vilification of national and international figures are willingly accepted as objective accounts if they are "official-looking". Veracity is afforded to those in control of its appearance.

In coming to America, the artists found themselves in another, albeit different, alienating super-structure that focused and controlled individual will to conformity. By co-opting the style of Social Realism and its subjects drawn from myth and national memory, the artists take its clarity and subvert it with anachronistic details, and skeptical depiction of historical figures for us to re-consider what we may often take for granted. Their work prods to occupy cultural settings with officialdom. Komar & Melamid's work and its recurring themes, as history, they insist, is subject to continual revision.

The ultimate subversion of officialdom is their willingness to assume responsibility for the action of others within this context. The world bore the weight of decisions made at Yalta, without being asked. The architecture of that image now needs remodeling, and they ask us to work on it, consider it, find its inherent flaws and adjust them. How can we make adjustments? Can informed activity set us on a course to make these adjustments? It probably depends on our sources of information—are they objective, are they complete?

Confronted with seemingly so much information and so many things to chose from, if we are to act, what is our ability to separate the meaningful from the trivial? If we express concern with the day-to-day proceedings at the O.J. Simpson trial and seek information by watching a brief on the evening news, are we only equally concerned with the National Debt, the Mid-East Peace talks and the war in Sarajevo? The channel-surfing tourist in us has bred a false familiarity with places we've never been and people we've never met. Divorced from scale, removed from specifics of place, and equally reduced to



deceptive in its assumption of a complete identity or past. The past is not finished and archived. Like knowledge, the past should be revisited continually, and re-examined through the contingencies of the world as they change. The suggestion that contemporary politics and culture are inextricably linked to this past is painfully evident through the strife and devastation raging through the former Yugoslavia. More than cartographic coincidence, this bloody conflict is an eruption resulting partly from Yalta's suppressions and also partly due to a world that allowed these divisions to be made without its input.

Nicholas Tobier March, 1995

Be careful, Komar & Melamid's work cautions, what appears to be familiar or nostalgic can be a fabrication,